

# CYA

California Youth Authority

2001  
YA Camps  
Special Edition

www.cya.ca.gov

# Today

Over 50 Years of Service to the People of California

## Director's Column



Jerry L. Harper  
Director

## Focus on the Camps

Soon after Karl Holton became the California Youth Authority's (CYA) first director in 1943, he brought with him the concept of the youth conservation camps. Mr. Holton's vision was of the camps becoming the best chance for troubled young men to turn their lives around. He saw the camps as beneficial for the youth and to the safety of the people of the State of California. He has been proven right on both views.

Since the first camp under the auspices of the California Youth Authority opened with 50 wards in the Calaveras Big Tree Park 58 years ago, the youth conservation camps have been one of the CYA's most effective programs — and its best kept secret. The world outside the neighboring mountain communities they serve knows little about the camps. Few are aware that the firefighters cutting firelines in bright orange suits are young men and women that are wards of the CYA.

Over the years, the staff and wards in the camps have saved homes from fires and floods. They have participated in searches for the lost, and they have been there to help communities shore levies and build sand-bag barriers to hold back floods from towns and neighborhoods.

(Please see **Director's**, Page two)

## The California Youth Authority Youth Conservation Camps



### Snapshots in Time:

## Youth Conservation Camps and the Youth Authority's History Intertwine

By **Norm Skonovd**  
Chief, Institutions and Camps Research Unit

Although we cannot imagine a Youth Authority without Preston, Nelles, and Ventura, the transfer of these institutions to the California Youth Authority's control in 1943 threatened the survival of this two-year-old experiment in juvenile justice administration. In assuming control of the three institutions, the Youth Authority became responsible for their inability to take all the commitments the court sent them as well as for the other problems that the media repeatedly brought to the public's attention. The new Authority was expected to turn things around immediately, but there seemed little that it could do.

The bed capacity in the three institutions had not increased since 1924 and no additional wards could be squeezed in.

Furthermore, the lack of state funds and rapid staff turnover rates due to the wartime economy, made the challenge appear almost impossible. In the same legislative session that amended the Youth Authority Act, there had been an attempt to repeal it. Some factions in the state believed that the new Authority was basically the same worn-out system with a new name and wanted it abolished. It was clear that if a solution could not be found, the Youth Authority might not be around for many more legislative sessions.

The obvious answer to the bed capacity problem was construction of new facilities, but this was out of the question due to the tight state budget as well as wartime restrictions. The Youth Authority, however, had been studying the use of camps as an alternative to other types of juvenile detention. It soon became apparent that camps could be a quick and inexpensive

way to relieve population pressures as well as a way to improve the Youth Authority's public image. Action was taken quickly, and a forestry camp was opened in 1943 at the Calaveras Big Trees Park. Buildings from the Benicia State Guard Camp were disassembled and shipped to Calaveras. Fifty boys who had been held in various county jails were transferred to the site to assist in the construction of a camp designed to house 100 boys.

Even with the opening of the Calaveras Camp, the Youth Authority was still unable to accept all court commitments. Many older boys continued to be held in county jails for long periods of time and public criticism continued. The Youth Authority turned to the camp concept again and in 1944 entered into a contract with the United States Army to operate two additional camps.

(Please see **History**, Page two)

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History...An Early Experiment That Still Works Today *(From page one)*



Most of the early camp facilities, like Ben Lomond (circa 1947), were unused military buildings that were moved to the camp sites.

Because these were military camps and assisted in the war effort, this move also improved the image of the new, struggling department. The first military camp opened at the Benicia Arsenal and the second at the Stockton Ordinance Depot. Both camps were designed to house 150 wards. The wards assigned to these camps assisted with military operations and worked at such tasks as loading and unloading war materials. They were trained by military personnel, worked with civilian employees and were paid the same wages as the civilians.

The military camp programs were considered one of the most successful of the custody alternatives that the new Youth Authority had at its disposal. Their real strength was that they enabled wards under custody to work in a non-custodial setting. Figures for the Benicia Arsenal camp between July 1944 and March 1946 indicate the size of these operations. During that period, 473 wards were admitted, a total of 390 wards were released to parole with only eighty not completing their assigned training. Even though considered highly successful, like most war-related institutions, these military camps were closed after the end of the war.

Because of their success in the operation of camps and favorable outcomes, the Youth Authority included camp programs in its comprehensive plan for rehabilitation through training, treatment, and education. In 1945, the Youth Authority entered into an agreement with the Division of Forestry to establish five forestry camps. Three camps were established almost

immediately: Coarsegold, near Mariposa, Whitmore in Shasta County, and Pine Grove. The Coarsegold camp was relocated to a new site at Mt. Bullion in 1956, although the original site continued to be used for some fire response operations. These camps were generally successful, but after several well-publicized escapes, the Whitmore camp was closed due to community pressure.

The Youth Authority also established a camp in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Saratoga and operated a small camp at Skarp's Peak for several months to dismantle old government buildings. When these camps closed, operations were relocated to Ben Lomond where a forestry camp and tree nursery was established in 1947. The Youth Authority's newest forestry camp, Washington Ridge, opened in 1961.

The Youth Authority's focus on camps in its early years had a lot to do with the man who was appointed the first director of the California Youth Authority, Karl Holton. Holton was a strong camp proponent and had been a pioneer in developing the first forestry camps for boys in the 1920s and 1930s. Similar to the challenge that would be faced by the Youth Authority when it assumed control of the three state schools in 1943, probation departments in counties such as Los Angeles and Riverside, had been unable to absorb the rapidly increasing number of boys the courts were sending them. (A large proportion of these boys came from the white migrant laborer families who were then arriving in great numbers to work on California farms.) Adult for-

California Youth Authority Youth Conservation Camps' Milestones

- 1943 Karl Holton was named first California Youth Authority director.
- The Governor transferred management of state reformatories — Preston, Nelles and Ventura — to the Youth Corrections Authority. Total wards in institutions, 1,080; total wards on parole, 1,625; staff, 517.  
Fifty boys transferred from county jails to the Calaveras Big Trees Park where they built a 100-bed capacity camp.
- 1944 The Youth Authority entered into a contract with the military for the establishment of two camps — one at Benicia Arsenal and the other at the Stockton Ordinance Depot — each with a population of 150 boys.
- 1945 The first boys arrived at Fricot Ranch School in Calaveras County. By fall of 1945, 100 boys and a full complement of staff were at the school. The 1,090-acre estate was leased with an option to purchase for \$60,000 and that option was exercised in 1946. Many youthful offenders in detention homes, jail and two army camps were awaiting commitment to the Youth Authority. Army camps were closed after the war and the growing need for facilities became a crisis.
- 1945 A state subsidy was given to counties for establishment of juvenile homes, ranches, camps for Juvenile Court wards. The Youth Authority administered the subsidy.  
Pine Grove Camp was established in Amador County.
- 1947 Ben Lomond Camp opens in Santa Cruz County
- 1956 Mt. Bullion Camp opens at present location in Mariposa County.
- 1961 The Youth Authority became part of the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency.  
Washington Ridge Camp opens in Nevada County.
- 1968 New facilities are constructed at Pine Grove and Ben Lomond Camps.
- 1971 Oak Glen Camp opens in San Bernardino County.
- 1975 Los Robles Fire Camp opens at the El Paso de Robles Youth Correctional Facility.
- 1976 Ponderosa Pre-Camp Training Program started at Preston Youth Correctional Facility. Camp candidate wards were operating out of the living units.
- 1979 Fenner Canyon opens in Los Angeles County.
- 1989 Ponderosa Pre-Camp facilities opens, separating camp candidate wards from Preston population.
- 1990 Ventura School opens a camp program and instituted the department's first female fire fighting crew. It was later renamed as the S. Carraway Public Service and Fire Center.  
Oak Glen Camp was closed due to budget concerns.  
Fenner Canyon Camp was transferred to CDC.

estry camps had been introduced earlier and it seemed logical that similar programs for juveniles could help address the increasing needs.

The first juvenile camps did indeed provide the safety valves that were so badly needed, but observers noted that they did something else. They appeared to be better than training schools in providing delinquent adolescents with "wholesome" physical conditioning, job training, and real work experience. Furthermore, the proponents of camp programs argued that unlike reformatories and training schools,

juvenile camps "turned young men around." Drawing on his experience in Los Angeles County, Holton introduced the juvenile camp concept to the Youth Authority as a way to accommodate all court commitments and implement new programs that embodied the rehabilitative concepts that the Youth Authority Act mandated. Appearing to have been put in place as almost desperate measures, these initial camp programs nevertheless set a progressive tone for a department that would soon become the model for juvenile justice treatment in post-WWII America.

Director's Column: YA Camps Are Returning Productive Citizens to Their Communities *(From page one)*

The youth conservation camps are also incubators for new and innovative ideas for helping the wards make wiser life decisions. The original concept of instilling a work ethic in the camp wards has developed into a process of working with the whole of the ward's view of life and the community of people they will return to on release.

The end product is not just a

physically fit person, but a young man or woman who will return better educated, with a better understanding of the impact of negative activities on victims, families and self.

The California Department of Forestry's fire captains and firefighters have become as important to the wards as the youth correctional officers and counselors. This is especially true since

staffing changes a few years ago removed the youth correctional counselors from the fire teams.

The youth conservation camps are good neighbors. Visit one, and it is clear why the neighboring communities raised a firestorm of protest with the State Legislature, when threats were made to close these camps because of budget constraints. The camp crews are not only there

during times of pending disasters, they are also there to help local entities with their community work projects.

Mr. Holton was right in his vision. The youth conservation camps are still among the best places to help the state's troubled youth — while maintaining the public safety — protecting property — and restoring forests following fire season.



# The California Youth Conservation Camps Provide Numerous Contributions to the State and Local Communities

History shows that since the first 50 California Youth Authority wards moved into the Calaveras Big Tree Park facilities in 1943, the California Youth Conservation Camps have had a

positive impact on the State and the local communities.

The most obvious services have been in fighting wild fires that threaten homes and the work done when floods threaten towns. The savings to the state in the cost of manpower is the difference between paying wards a dollar per day compared to the \$18 to \$20 per hour that California Department of Forestry (CDF) fire fighters are paid. For example, the 686,901 hours expended on fire suppression in 1999 and 2000, alone, saved the State of California \$12.36 million, if these hours had been

paid to CDF personnel at \$18 per hour.

The local communities also benefit greatly from the community service hours the wards provide to their communities. The beneficiaries are generally city parks and recreation departments where wards work cleaning weeds, renovating benches and ballpark facilities. There are also the non-profit organizations like senior citizen centers and homes that get new coats of paint and landscaping. The camp community service crews have also provided property maintenance and improvements to battered women's shelters. In addition, the city of Mariposa's streets and downtown businesses get their Christmas season garlands from decorations created and mounted by the community service crews at Mt. Bullion.

Communities that have a California Youth Authority camp as a neighbor always benefit because of the services they provide and the relationships they establish with the camp leaders.

# What I Learned at Pine Grove Camp

By **Eddie Rodriquez**  
Pine Grove Camp ward

My experience at Pine Grove Camp was not what I expected. It was better. When I first came, I was ready to fight fires. I was also ready to change myself.

Before I arrived at Pine Grove Camp I was at a pre-fire camp for training. While there, I had to decide which out of five camps to go to. I could've chosen one close to home, but I needed help with my emotions. I asked about the camps and what kind of counseling and programs they had to offer at the pre-camp.

When you're one of the older guys around, it's hard to ask a ward about the counseling that a camp provides. I asked about how the programs are run. I talked to some staff that knew about the camps. I asked about Pine Grove and they told me that it had better counseling programs and that's all I needed to hear.

I could've gone to a camp closer to home so I would get some visits, but I wanted to do something right for the first time in my life. I am a four-time parole violator and this in-and-out of jail thing isn't working anymore. I lost good jobs and friends for making bad decision.

I came into camp August 10, 2000. Within the first two weeks, I was fighting fires with my crew. I was in one of the best crews in camp. Nobody could mess with us in cutting line or sports, but there was still something missing.

When I started a small group, I became more open minded. I was opening my inner wounds with my counselor. I was so tired of carrying secrets around that not even my family knew about.

In these groups, I saw videos about changes, a better life, and victims. These secrets I held inside messed up the way I lived my life.

We have a group called Toastmasters. It helps us with our speech and communication skills. I am also earning high school English credits. We have to stand in front of at least eighteen people and talk for no less than seven minutes. One day, I gave a speech. I talked about some things that I didn't think I could say.

After the speech, a lot of people came up to me and said it was a good presentation. I felt good after that day. I felt like a 100lb. backpack had been taken off of my back. I really "let the cat out of the bag." People still come up to me and ask, "How did you have the guts to talk about what happened to you?" Some people tell me I'm lying. They can't believe I would reveal those secrets if they were true. I tell them it's the truth, point blank.

I am in touch now with my inner child, and we are healing.

Camp Public Service, Fire and Flood Control Hours	
1999	
Fire Suppression	401,322
Flood Control	44,752
Public Service*	286,734
Total	732,808
2000	
Fire Suppression	285,579
Flood Control	24,014
Public Service*	276,542
Total	586,135
*Public Service — These do not include public service hours for Ponderosa, S. Carraway or Los Robles. These camps' public Service hours are combined with the Ventura and Preston and El Paso de Robles Youth Correctional Facilities.	

“Value based character education permeates every aspect of the treatment program at PGYCC, and our work projects for the community help restore the balance of justice taken from society.”

Larry McGuire Jr., Assistant Superintendent  
Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp

“The wards at Pine Grove Camp have a distinct opportunity to change their lives. If they don't take advantage of it, they can't blame anyone but themselves.”

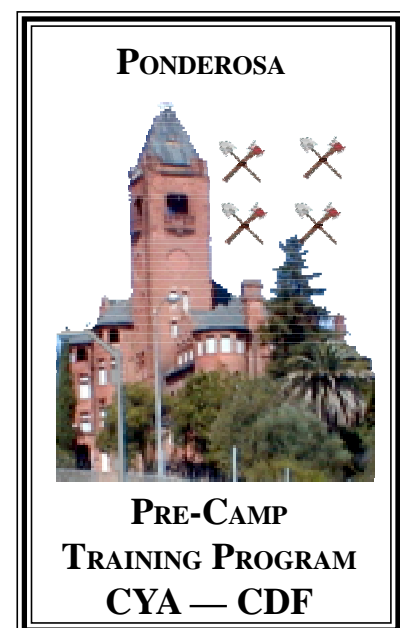
Tod Dorris, Division Chief  
California Department of Forestry, PGYCC







## Before the Camps ... There is Pre-Camp Ponderosa Pre-Camp Training Program and S. Carraway Public Service and Fire Center



### The Pre-Camp Mission

The Ponderosa Pre-Camp Training Program and the S. Carraway Public Service and Fire Center are joint programs operated by the California Youth Authority and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection program providing a limited security setting for Youth Authority wards. The Pre-Camp programs accept wards from Youth Authority reception centers and Youth Authority institutions. The program is designed to select, screen and fire train Youth Authority wards in preparation for placement in one of the five youthful offender conservation camps located at Pine Grove, Ben Lomond, Washington Ridge, Mt. Bullion and Ventura. The Los Robles Fire Camp trains and prepares its own wards to become fire fighters.

## Carraway and Ponderosa Prepare Male and Female Wards, Mentally and Physically for Camps

By: **Julio C. Calderón**  
Editor, *CYA Today*

Before wards are assigned to any of the camps, they must first go through the Pre-Camp programs. The men are sent to the Ponderosa Pre-Camp, located near the Preston Youth Correctional Facility in Ione. Ponderosa

Carraway is the fact that Carraway trains female fire fighters. The Carraway Fire Center has 98 wards, while there are 104 going through Ponderosa.

The pre-camps are charged with preparing wards for the rigors of fighting wild land fires. The camp wards need to learn the proper use of the equipment they will be using. They need to learn about protecting their own safety and that of other team members. And they have to be physically and mentally fit for the job.

The first week at pre-camp is physical and mental conditioning through exercise and activities with emphasis on teamwork and camp-related skills. The wards are also given

an orientation that provides them with information regarding the type of mail and packages they can receive; visiting and telephone call policies; review of their Youthful Offender Parole Board (YOPB) orders and their legal status.

During the second week the camp candidates get 32 hours of basic classroom fire training from a CDF fire captain. The

wards are given instructions in everything from basic physics to learning about safety equipment that could save their lives in a critical situation. They learn basic first aid and the hazards of falling or rolling materials. They must also learn ten standard fire orders and 18 rules that shout 'watch out' during a firefight.

In the third week, they focus on hands-on training with the tools they will use to cut fire lines. During this week of training they learn how to properly construct a fire line. The wards are tested at the end of the week and are evaluated and reviewed. The wards that pass with scores of 70 percent or better work on community service projects until they are assigned to a camp.

The pre-camp programs are critical to the CYA and California Department of Forestry (CDF) run camps throughout the state. The CYA fire crews are the hand-crews needed in fires to cut fire lines that impede the progress of wild fires, leaving the task of



*The female camp candidates go through the same training as their male counterparts during the pre-camp training.*

containing the fire to CDF fire fighters. They are also the crews that go into local communities on needed projects in the cities and counties that host the camps.

### PROGRAM GOALS

The program goals of the of the Ponderosa Pre-Camp Program are directly related to the goal of the CYA and CDF camp program. This goal is to provide:

- An economical method of housing wards of the California Youth Authority.
- Trained fire fighter man power source for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.
- A work force for community and conservation work.



*The camp candidate's introduction to safety and tactics is in a classroom with a CDF fire captain.*

rosa supplies fire fighters to all of the camps. The female fire fighters' pre-camp is at the S. Carraway Public Service and Fire Center. The fire center is both the pre-camp and camp for the female fire fighters. The camp portion also houses four male fire crews of 17 members and Crew 5, the female fire fighting crew. The only difference between Ponderosa and



*Before the wards even get to the classroom, they are prepared physically. It is Youth Correctional Counselor Tom Menley's responsibility at Ponderosa Pre-Camp to see that wards meet the minimum physical requirement for camp duty.*



*The rigors of fighting wild land fires in rough terrain and high altitudes require that physical fitness is a high priority in training camp candidates at the pre-camps.*



# Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp

By **Larry McGuire Jr.**  
Assistant Superintendent

Pine Grove Youth Conservation Camp was originally built as a Civilian Conservation Corps facility during the heart of the Great Depression. In 1946, the California Youth Authority took over the camp facilities and Pine Grove Camp was established. Pine Grove Camp was the first Youth Conservation Camp operated jointly by the California Division of Forestry and the Youth Authority. During the late 1960's, the old camp buildings were torn down and new construction began on the buildings that still house Pine Grove Camp.

Pine Grove Camp is located in a small valley along Grass Valley Creek, two miles east of Pine Grove, Amador County, in the heart of the historic Mother Lode.

The area surrounding Pine Grove was settled in the early 1800's, and with the discovery of gold in the 1840's, thousands of people rushed in to try to make



*The Youth Conservation Camp era dawned as a Youth Authority program with the establishment of Pine Grove Camp in 1946.*

their fortunes. Few were successful.

The Kennedy mine and the Argonaut mine, between Jackson and Sutter Creek, produced more than \$60 million in gold. The Argonaut mine was worked from an inclined shaft to a depth of 6,750 feet, which is one of the deepest in the world. The mines were closed by the government in 1943 and never have reopened.

A few miles north of Pine Grove is the little town of Volcano, settled in 1848. \$90 million in gold was mined in this area.

Originally the camp was situated in Big Trees State Park in Calaveras County under agreement with the Division of

Beaches and Parks. The camp was opened in 1945, and in the spring of 1946 was moved to property leased from Mrs. Lillian Payton. This property was the site of the old Pine Grove Civilian Conservation Corps Camp that was active in the thirties.

Division of Forestry personnel did the camp construction from Amador and neighboring Mother Lode counties utilizing ward labor and some artisan labor. The workers were housed and fed in existing CCC buildings and in nearby Forestry stations. As the new buildings were completed, the old buildings were torn down. Material was salvaged and reused.

In the early sixties, plans were made to rebuild. In 1962,



98 acres were purchased, including the original 40 leased acres. In the summer of 1967, a Forestry Mobile Trailer, consisting of fourteen trailers was moved in to house the camp population while the old buildings were torn down and the new buildings constructed.

When the area was clear, Forestry personnel and equipment graded and prepared the site. The Department of Architecture and Construction laid out the plans and construction began on March 4, 1968, and was completed and occupied in May 1969.

Over the years, camp population has fluctuated from the original maximum of 80 youthful offenders to a high of 116 in 1990. Current camp population is 82 wards organized into four trained fire crews, a community service crew and in-camp workers who provide back up and support services for the camp and can be formed into an additional fire crew if the need arises.

## Pine Grove Community Service Crew Restoring History



*These are centuries-old grinding rocks used by ancient tribes.*

By **Gerald L. McCarthy**  
Youth Correctional Counselor

Visitors to the Chaw-Se Indian Grinding Rock State Park arrive to view the densest assemblage of ancient grinding rocks in California and enter into the cavernous Round House. The Round House is the religious gathering point for members of the California Miwok Indians.

While in the Round House, one is struck by the sheer magnitude of the construction effort before them. By any modern construction standard, this thing is huge!

The round structure begins

with hand cut cedar and oak timbers arranged in a circle in the center, some nearly three feet in diameter. Then smaller logs are placed on top to radiate outward, like the spokes of a wheel, from the center nearly twenty feet high. They slope downward into a burm of dirt that makes the walls of the structure.

The entire structure is then topped with slabs of cedar bark, some larger than the men that laid them. Each piece is tediously cut, fitted, and lashed together with vines by hand - no prefabricated parts here. One who visits

*(Please see Pine Grove, Page six)*

## What is 'Special' About Pine Grove

By **Lyla Osmundsen**  
Resource Specialist

It is the best of places and the worst of places. If a young man loves freedom, and acknowledges the attendant personal responsibility, Pine Grove Camp offers hard work for a new direction. If watching TV and lying in bed are priorities, fighting fires and floods seem a horrible and dangerous intrusion in the life of a ward.

There is a great degree of cooperation and collaboration between California Department of Forestry (CDF) and CYA staff that extends the emphasis on ethics into the workday. CDF fire captains who supervise the forestry crews not only teach the basic skills necessary to maintain employment, but also act as role models, showing the ability to get along with co-workers, complete assigned tasks, follow instructions, accept criticism and maintain a good attitude toward the job and supervisors.

Camp staff frequently offer their unique skills outside the scope of their job description. Linda Brizzi, management ser-

vices technician, teaches choral skills at Christmas. Brizzi, along with custody staff, takes the singing group on the road to other CYA facilities and to surrounding communities.

YCC Leon Germolus supervises the clock shop and silk screening projects. In addition to hand-crafted wooden clocks, wards learn how to make other woodcrafts such as pen sets and bird houses that, along with clocks, are sold to the public. Proceeds from silk screening and woodcrafts go to the camp ward fund that is used for charitable donations and inspirational activities.

Harry Linden, senior youth correctional counselor, assists the educational staff in teaching fine arts by arranging trips to see plays in Volcano, West Point and in Sutter Creek. PGYCC crews helped construct the theater in Volcano. Coach Linden also organizes and supervises the in-house sports program of soccer, baseball and football (with Super Bowl, T-shirts, and prizes).

Pine Grove Camp School is compact, yet comprehensive.



Pine Grove...

(From page five)  
this behemoth structure must wonder what the labor cost was to complete such a project. What is not typically known by the general public is that it was constructed almost entirely by the Pine Grove Community Service Crew. Under the supervision of YCC Emilio DelRio and the guidance of State and Native American representatives, the project took nearly two months of dedicated effort to complete.  
All of the wards that par-

maculate" is their signature.  
Through years of hard work this is what the community has come to expect of the crews.  
The Pine Grove Community Service Crew had its inception in 1987. Currently, Del Rio handles the reins, providing the necessary guidance to the crew. YCC Gerald McCarthy has the crew one day per week and successfully helped manage the crew for six months over the past year.  
The Community Service Crew was organized to project the mission and values of the Youth Authority directly into the community. It



This Miwok Round House was constructed by wards. None of the materials that went into the building were prefabricated.

ticipated have since faded into their anonymous futures.  
However their legacy remains for the community to view and enjoy. You see, this is the essence of their business. The members of the Community Service Crew are often an unseen force in the community. They are anonymous and faceless to much of the community they serve. Too often the clean trails, mended rock walls and the neatly trimmed trees and grounds are taken for granted by visitors, not realizing the enormous ongoing efforts of the Community Service Crew.  
To the community members that know of the crew, "getting the job done" is their reputation. "Efficient and caring" is their personality, and "all things straight and im-

is intended to serve as a bridge to the community by working more directly in the community than the fire crews, whose function is more toward conservation.  
An emphasis was placed on discipline, professionalism and being directly accessible to the community. Any government agency or qualifying non-profit organization needs only to phone the camp directly and request the services of the crew. Before the crew is assigned a project, a team that includes a member of management, the crew supervisor, and a knowledgeable representative of the requesting group evaluates the request. Security concerns, scope of the project, safety and other aspects of the project are evaluated. Time is then allotted for the crew to perform the project to completion. This is the critical element.

No project is approved that is beyond the crew's ability to complete well. To do a poor job of a project hurts the reputation of both parties and inevitably ends up costing the sponsor valuable resources to fix. As a rule, each job is done completely, efficiently and to a high standard.

Projects that the crew has been (Please see *Pine Grove*, Page seven)



Anita Hatfield's Preemie Knitting program at the Preston Youth Correctional Facility carries over to the camp. Knitting has a calming effect after a day of hard work.



Washington Ridge Youth Conservation Camp (Nevada County)

By Maj. Steve Gardner  
Superintendent, Washington Ridge Youth Conservation Camp  
  
Washington Ridge Camp is located 10 miles east of historic Nevada City on an 80-acre site at the 3800-foot level in the beautiful Tahoe National Forest. The California Department of Forestry and the California Youth Authority jointly operate the camp.  
The Department of Forestry employs 13 staff and the Depart-



ment of the Youth Authority employs 31. Construction on the camp began in 1959 with the facility dedicated on Nov. 4, 1961.  
Prior to Washington Ridge's creation, a 25-bed spike camp at the Forestry Station in Smartsville in Nevada County was in use. The Smartsville facility was attached to Washington Ridge Camp until the spike camp was closed in 1966.  
The camp was originally designed to provide a work-oriented program for 76 Youth Authority wards. The camp now provides program for 80 wards. The young men range in age from 18 to 24. They are committed for a variety of criminal offenses that result in a 4 to 24-month camp program.

The wards are divided into five forestry crews and an in-camp crew. The five forestry crews consist of approximately 17 wards and a fire crew captain each.  
The crews are involved in a wide variety of project work that results in thousands of man-hours of needed public service.  
Projects consist of developing and maintaining fire breaks; maintenance and improvements at State Parks; construction work such as the Visiting Hall and water storage tanks; improving fish and wildlife habitat for the California Fish and Game Department; assisting CalTrans with highway maintenance, and many other projects too numerous to list.  
Each ward has the potential to facilitate a change in his attitude and behavior and will be given the opportunity.

One of the primary missions of the camp is to respond to emergencies (i.e. fire fighting, search and rescue and flood relief). The ward fire fighting hours between 1993 and 2000 are as follows:

Year	Man Hours
1993	35,035
1994	69,372
1995	50,591
1996	61,505
1997	57,733
1998	48,539
1999	80,618
2000	58,065

During their off-duty hours, wards can take advantage of a wide variety of program activities that will improve their chances of being successful on parole.



Ben Lomond Youth Conservation Camp (Santa Cruz County)

A Long Tradition of Service

By Michael Naluai  
Superintendent  
  
Ben Lomond Youth Correctional Conservation Camp has a 54-year history of public service and fire protection. The site for Ben Lomond Camp was chosen soon after World War II.  
In the early part of 1947, California Youth Authority wards stationed at Saratoga Summit Forestry Fire Station formed the labor force to build the new campsite. Old wooden Civilian Conservation Corps structures were moved from the Sharp Park World War II relocation center in

South San Francisco to the present site and reconstructed by the wards and staff.  
Ben Lomond was the third youth camp established and operated by the California Department of Forestry (CDF) and the California Youth Authority (CYA). The original buildings were replaced in 1968. The basic mission of Ben Lomond Youth Conservation Camp remains the same (1) to protect the public from further criminal activity by providing educational, employment training, and treatment to youthful offenders, and (2) provide fire protection and (Please see *Ben Lomond*, Page twelve)





## Mt. Bullion Youth Conservation Camp (Mariposa County)

By **Dennis Baker**  
Superintendent, Mt. Bullion Youth Conservation Camp

Mt. Bullion Youth Conservation Camp was originally established in the Madera County community of Coarsegold in 1945 as the Coarsegold Camp. During the summers the fire season, a spike camp, consisting of one or two camp crews, was quartered in tents at the site where Mt. Bullion Camp sits today.

When it was determined that the water supply at the Coarsegold site was inadequate to meet the needs of a planned 80-bed facility, land was bought

near the top of Mt. Bullion in Mariposa County. Present day Mt. Bullion Camp was completed in 1956. The road leading to the camp was completely constructed by the wards assigned to the camp, which was dedicated in 1957.

Mt. Bullion and Coarsegold reversed roles, making Coarsegold the spike camp. The 'Spike' camp was the satellite for the main camp. These were established for the purpose of greater coverage of a larger area during the fire season. Rapid movement of crews wasn't what it is today so the spike camps were where crews were assigned to live in tents to cover areas more quickly than they could be dispatched from the main camp. Coarsegold continued to serve as a spike camp until it was eventually closed.

The camp was originally built for 80 wards, but in the late 1980s the population was 105, down from 115 that were crowded into the camp during a brief experiment.

*(Please see Mt. Bullion, Page nine)*



*The Mt. Bullion hot-food wagon has become a welcome sight at fire camps.*



## S. Carraway Public Service and Fire Camp (Ventura County)

By **Dwayne Johnson**  
Camp Administrator

The California Youth Authority (CYA) and the California Department of Forestry (CDF) work in cooperation to operate the S. Carraway Ventura Public Service and Fire Center. The S. Carraway fire camp program originated in April 1990.

While the camp maintains a compliment of 79 male fire fighters, its female fire fighting crews make this camp unique in the Youth Authority Youth Conservation Camp system. It is the only female fire camp program in CYA. During its first 11 years of service, the female firefighters have proved as determined and effective fire fighting crews as their male counter-parts.

At the Ventura Youth Correctional Facility, female firefighters are housed on the Miramar Unit, separate from the Ventura Camp, which is adjacent to the facility. On Miramar Unit, there are currently 16 female firefighters and two in training.

The female fire crew is designated "Crew 5." They are assigned to public service work projects in the community. Their assignments cover areas in Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles counties.

Female firefighting candidates at the Ventura Youth Correctional Facility are screened by their living unit parole agent for eligibility for camp placement, including a custody/security check. They are referred to the chief medical officer for medical clearance. If selected after the screening and medical clearance, the ward is then referred for acceptance to the camp program.

After entrance to the female camp program, the ward must successfully pass classroom and physical training in order to advance to Crew 5.

Once a female camp ward promotes to Crew 5 they are able

*(Please see Crew Five, Page ten)*



## Los Robles Fire Camp El Paso de Robles Youth Correctional Facility (San Luis Obispo County)

By **Jackie Chambers**  
Treatment Team Supervisor

The Los Robles Fire Camp at the El Paso de Robles Youth Correctional Facility is unique. The California Youth Authority (CYA) has six camps manned with Juvenile and Superior Court commitments; four are mountain camps and two are based at institutions. Los Robles Fire Camp is one of the two institution based camps and the only fire camp in the state that uses wards under the age of eighteen. The average age of its 95 to 125 wards is 17 years of age.

This camp is also unique in that, other than the S. Carraway Ventura Fire Center's female crews, it is the only male fire camp that has its own pre-camp program. The wards are selected from among volunteers from the institution population and trained at the Los Robles Fire camp before joining one of the camp's three fire crews. The concept was implemented when the camp was established in 1975.

The reason this camp went with wards under the age of 18

### Pine Grove ...

*(From page six)*

involved in have ranged from the highly visible to the obscure and from the routine to the exciting. One such project involves the historic Kennedy Mine in Jackson, California. This gold mine was the richest and deepest mine in North America when it was in operation. The main shaft descended nearly five thousand feet below the surface. The crew has been involved in clearing the grounds, recovering artifacts and assisting in the renovation of the century old buildings. The head frame remains the tallest mining structure in the Mother Lode.

Less than a mile from the camp is the location of a now abandoned and obscure gold rush-era town site, formerly



*Wards at Pine Grove Camp produce more than 2,500 swags each year for Mariposa residents and businesses*

named Aqueduct. Not a trace of the town site remains except for a one acre cemetery that, until recently, few people knew existed.

The Community Service

is because all of the other camps were competing for the older wards. The El Paso de Robles Youth Correctional Facility's population was all juvenile and provided an in-house talent pool that other camps were ignoring.

Initially, there were concerns because some assumed that the juvenile Los Robles wards would not be able to keep up with the adult crews while cutting fire breaks. In reality, Los Robles crews not only keep up with, but also often surpass, the adult crews in pre-season training competitions, as well as in real firefighting. The wards take great pride in proving that their skills are equal to, and that their stamina surpasses those on the adult crews. The Los Robles crews are often complimented by their peers as well as the other crews' supervisors on the amount of work and the quality of work they do while on the fire line.

When the wards are in camp, the cottage staff continue working on team building concepts by hosting crew athletic competitions such as races, baseball games, and basketball tournaments, swimming competitions,

*(Please see Los Robles, Page twelve)*

Crew cleared the one acre parcel then surveyed and cataloged several gold rush-era graves and found evidence of still more. This has been a very important project for the descendants of those buried there and for the historians.

In addition to special projects like those above, the crew makes regular maintenance stops each month to provide cost saving services to community and service organizations, such as the Amador and Calaveras County Women's Shelters, Interfaith Food Bank, local Head Start schools, public parks and cemeteries.

They have assisted the East Bay Municipal Utility District with the on-going construction of staging areas for a 'coast to crest' nature trail, as well as other beautification projects. These projects take the crew through the year and are used as springboards to more contacts for future projects. The Community Service Crew provides more than 12,000 man-hours annually to the local community.

As an effort to provide the community something tangible, the Community Service Crew also manufactures cement picnic tables that are sold to qualifying groups at cost. These tables have

*(Please see Pine Grove, Page nine)*



# CDF Mentors: Camp Wards Become Fire Fighters

By **Julio C. Calderón**  
Editor, *CYA Today*

The ultimate success of a California Youth Conservation camp is in the young men and women they parole from their crews. While the camp environment is totally different from that of an institution in terms of space and open facilities, the work regimen is hard. There is also the difference in the staff involved in their training and supervision.

While there is no doubt that the youth correctional officers and counselors have a very positive influence on the youth assigned to camps, their work is enhanced by the personnel from the California Department of Forestry (CDF) that provide an additional and different "mentor" influence on these young men and women facing a major crossroad in their lives.

The influence that the CDF captains have on the CYA wards in these camps became obvious and important as this *CYA Today* camps project evolved. One striking example was found at the Ben Lomond Youth Conservation Camp. The camp is also home to a CDF Training Academy.

Ben Lomond Superintendent Michael Naluai was asked about any success stories that his camp has produced. He was quick to point out that a ward that paroled on March 22, 2001, was now attending the CDF Academy.

The former ward is now CDF Fire Fighter I Edsel Espinosa, who spent two and a half years in the California Youth Authority (CYA). CDF Captain Tony Arnold is a 17-year veteran fire fighter who keeps an eye out for potential recruits among the CYA wards in his fire crews. During Espinosa's stay at Ben Lomond, Arnold found that the ward truly enjoyed the work involved in fire fighting. Arnold saw all of the signs of a potential recruit in Espinosa.

The ward was not only a quick learner, he became ab-



*Mentor and mentee, CDF Capt. Tony Arnold and Fire Fighter I cadet Edsel Espinosa share a moment at Ben Lomond Camp.*

sorbed in fire fighting. So much so, that at one point he was ignoring his programs and regular classroom lessons. It was Capt. Arnold that pointed out to the ward that his classroom work would be extremely important to his future opportunities as a fire fighter in CDF.

Espinosa almost lost his way when he was returned to DeWitt Nelson Youth Correctional Facility in Stockton for getting involved in a fight. He recognized what he lost and worked his way back to Ben Lomond by concentrating on his tasks and staying out of trouble at the institution.

"I never dreamed that I could ever become a CDF fire fighter," Espinosa said, "not with my criminal record."

As his parole consideration date approached, Espinosa asked Capt. Arnold for an application to CDF's academy. Capt. Arnold had been counseling Espinosa, and providing him with the knowledge he would need to successfully apply to CDF. Espinosa was paroled to his home in Vallejo, where he was able to spend two weeks before returning to Ben Lomond as a CDF recruit in the Academy.

Capt. Tony Arnold's actions are not an exception among the CDF personnel at the CYA youth conservation camps. The CDF's crew captains have become more involved in mentoring the wards since CYA personnel were re-

moved from the accompanying wards in the crew trucks to fires and assignments. Every morning there is an official transfer of authority between CYA correctional staff to CDF staff, so during the day, the wards are completely under CDF supervision.

The relationship between wards and CDF personnel becomes an important issue for safety

and security. The wards, not accustomed to discipline and authority by nature, must be willing to respond to orders in an emergency situation. They must learn to function as a team at all times. The wards develop a trust in the CDF personnel that will lead and guide them through raging wild fires. This is a relationship that, only on rare occasions, develops between wards and those assigned to watch them.

Capt. Arnold is unique as a mentor to these wards. He knows where they come from and what led them to be wards of the California Youth Authority. Capt. Arnold took the wrong path at one time in his life, just like these wards. Some 17 years, or so ago, Capt. Arnold was a member of a California Department of Corrections fire crew when he was bitten by the fire fighting bug. He says he has never forgotten his beginnings. So when he spots a ward with signs of being smitten by the profession, he gladly imparts advice and knowledge that may help a ward on his course to a career in fire suppression.

Espinosa is not his first recruit, nor is Capt. Arnold the only CDF captain in the service recruiting young men from the youth conservation camps. Each camp has enjoyed its own level of success in spotting and developing skills within wards that now help society.

## You Can Make a Difference

By **Tony Arnold**  
Captain, Department of Forestry

I am a Fire Captain with the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection assigned to Ben Lomond Youth Conservation Camp. My duties include, but are not limited to, supervision, training, fire suppression, and medical emergencies. I am a firm believer that it benefits us all to strive to help these wards make positive changes in their lives and practice this in my every day encounters with wards that I supervise.

Approximately 16 months ago, Ward Edsel "Ed" Espinoza came to my fire crew as a new crewmember. He started as the 12<sup>th</sup> man in the crew order. I could tell right off that he had a great work ethic and moved him up the hook line until he became the Truck Captain. He appeared to grasp everything that I was able to teach him and use it to his benefit. In his spare time Espinoza volunteered to take a CPR course, Employment Skills classes and other extra duty assignments.

In January 2001, the testing for Fire Fighter I was announced and our chief asked if we could recommend anyone. It was my privilege to recommend Espinoza. The hiring process included taking a written examination and a hiring interview. Espinoza was selected from among many other competitors.

The next step was to get through the Academy in Fire Fighter I. Espinoza passed the Fire Fighter I Academy as a squad leader and at the top of his class in May 2001.

I am proud to say the San Mateo/Santa Cruz Ranger Unit currently employs him as a Fire Fighter I.

*Editor's note: Arnold is but one of the CDF Captains that can claim CYA recruits. Every one of the CYA camps has a 'success' story working for the CDF or local fire departments. Some former wards are also with elite fire jumper units in other states.*



*The physical training the wards go through at the precamps to reach a camp assignment is continued once they reach the camps. The wards pictured above are at the initial part of their annual fire preparedness testing. Safety is as important as physical training. A few*

*of these wards were found short on water supplies-- less water lightens the backpack for their march. But, in a real fire situation dehydration is a major problem that can lead to the endangerment of the entire crew.*



## Mt. Bullion Has a History of Service

(From page seven)

Mt. Bullion's history nearly ended in 1990 when budget constraints almost closed the camp, along with Oak Glen and Fenner Canyon.

Instead, the camp converted into an "M" number facility with inmates from the California Department of Corrections (CDC) that were ordered to be housed in the CYA. One-third of the CYA staff was transferred to other facilities. The camp was restored as a Youth Authority wards camp.

Many thousands of acres of forest, recreation, natural habitat, and home sites have been saved from destruction through the crew's fire suppression efforts. At times, the wards and staff may spend several days or even weeks on a fire, putting in long hours on the fireline with sleep breaks in the fire camp. Sometimes they

have to walk a long distance into a fire and at other times they are flown into the fire area by helicopter. The CYA crews are generally considered to be among the best-trained and most effective firefighting units in the state. Their efforts have totaled 267,010 hours during that same 5-year period.

1996	40,568
1997	46,083
1998	45,420
1999	79,202
2000	55,737

The wards are paid a dollar a day. These five years on fire lines has cost the state approximately \$11,125. CDF fire fighters' starting pay is approximately \$18 per hour. The same hours CYA Mt. Bullion crews spend on fire lines would have cost the state approximately \$4,806,180 over the same five-year period.

## From the Fire Lines to Helping Hands

By Mt. Bullion Program Staff

Mt. Bullion Youth Conservation Camp wards who do not participate on regular crews, work on the public service crew, culinary program, or in various in-camp positions such as laundry, janitorial or maintenance. Mt. Bullion's Public Service Crew, "Helping Hands," consists of one YCC Bob Kirchner and four wards. For the past 10 years, they have served as the camp's most active and visible presence in the community.

During the spring, the crew provides fire prevention brush

vided through referral from, and review by, the Mariposa County Senior Assistance Office. Kirchner and his crew also provide landscaping, maintenance and on-going support to the Mountain Crisis Services Domestic Abuse Shelter and Mariposa County Senior Center. This is why Mariposa's senior citizens are the camp's most ardent, appreciative and vocal supporter.

The Mariposa Museum and History Center receives on-going support from the Public Service Crew, in the form of building and grounds maintenance, exhibit preparation and setup to



*The bakery products wards make are sold through outlets in Mariposa. They are also sold to local restaurant, from burgers to high end dining.*

Kirchner and the crew helping to distribute food to needy families under the direction of Manna House, the local food bank.

During the Christmas holiday, "Helping Hands," with the added assistance of YCC Doug Kanarowski, constructs and distributes over 400 Christmas swags to local businesses throughout Mariposa County.

Additionally, the crew works all year long on refurbishing used donated bikes for distribution through Manna House to needy children at Christmas. The camp has been able to donate an average of 40 of these bikes each year.

In addition to the camp kitchen crew's responsibilities of providing regular meals three times daily to the camp population, and the emergency fire meals served either at the camp, or on site at local fires, the camp kitchen operates BREAD, its

unique cottage industry.

The BREAD program, (Bakers Receiving Education And Direction) is the basis for the camp's culinary program. The program provides training and experience in commercial baking skills while providing sales of baked goods to the community.

Proceeds from the sales of baked items go to purchase the raw materials, with 20 percent to the BREAD ward's trust account, and the remainder helps to fund the camp's Victims Assistance Fund which provides donations to various community groups to benefit victims of crime. Baked goods from the BREAD program are sold regularly to outlets, and facilities, in the local community such as: Happy Burger, Charles Street Dinner House, Yosemite Dan's Deli, Bootjack Deli, and the Mariposa County Jail. During

(Please see *Mt. Bullion's*, Page ten)

## Pine Grove...

(From page seven)

become highly desirable due to their visible appeal, durability and cost.

In late September, the crew travels to the high country to gather sugar pine cones and pine boughs for the manufacture of holiday swags. The swags consist of two pine cones bound at the stem then flanked by two flared cedar boughs.

The brown and green swags are then donated to city governments who display them throughout their towns to give that festive look during the holidays. This has been a 20-year tradition that has grown to more than 2,500 swags produced each year, and still growing.

Of all the projects the crew has performed over the years there remains one that is special — one that each member puts their full effort into. It was the design and construction of a gazebo and memorial garden for Patrick Kinn, a beloved staff member who passed way in 2000. It was made more important by the fact that he was struck down at the pinnacle of his career by a virus so rare in humans

that it claimed only five lives in the past ten years in the United States. A bat bit him and within two weeks he had succumbed to the rabies virus. The memorial garden has become a place of quiet reflection and reverence where the crew continues to take great pride in their monument to a great person.

The community has come to respect the Community Service Crew of Pine Grove for their ongoing efforts and has continued to support the efforts of the camp and its mission. The true value of having an accessible and responsive Community Service Program can never be overemphasized.

Just as the camp responds when the community is in need, so too does the community come forward when the camp is in need. When the camp was being considered for closing in 1992, the community rallied around the camp, holding support rallies and providing busses to get the hundreds of supporters to the Capitol to voice their concerns, taking the camp off the budget hit list.



*The wards clear tall dried grass in late spring. The camp is used as a staging area for other CYA and CDC fire crews.*

and weed clearance for local senior citizens, enabling them to meet the 30-foot clearance around structures required by the California Department of Forestry. In the fall, the crew delivers cut, split and stacked firewood to needy senior citizens.

Each of these projects is pro-

keep the building looking its best.

The crew also hauls thousands of books from storage and back, several times a year, for the Friends of the Library's book sales, that financially helps support the county library.

Thanksgiving season finds  
(Please see top of next column)



## Crew Five ...

(From page seven)

to respond to fires. Fire season usually begins in the middle of May and lasts until the end of November.

A female firefighter must be ready when responding to a fire.



There is a certain amount of pride that comes with making it to Crew Five. After all, they competed, and in some cases, beat male crews in fire exercises.

This means they must have their fire clothing and gear ready. During non-fire season, generally December through March, the fire crew will be involved in emergency flood control and fire prevention projects in the local community and county areas.

Monday through Friday, Crew 5 works off-grounds with their fire captain at a designated grade assignment. Daily assignments include control burns, cutting fire breaks, assisting local fire departments in projects and hiking for physical conditioning for fire and flood seasons. On Miramar Living Unit, the crewmembers have a stationary weight-lifting system, stair masters, and exercise mats to work out.

After a full workday, crew members prepare for night school. Most of the female fire crew members attend high school classes at night. Some crew members are high school graduates and attend evening college classes through Ventura Community College.

In addition to participating in the fire camp program, the young women are responsible for completing their Youthful Offender Parole Board orders.

On Miramar Unit, there are three assigned camp Youth Correctional Counselors, Leticia Pacheco, Christopher Figueroa and Kasha Clemons. Each counselor conducts small group counseling sessions weekly. Pacheco facilitates Anger Management-Cage Your Rage and Figueroa conducts the Gang Awareness counseling group. Other board ordered treatment groups offered include Parenting and Informal Drug Education.

Female fire crewmembers participate in the Impact of Crime on Victims Program twice a week. Female fire crew mem-

bers also participate in "Youth At-Risk" gang prevention program and the Kiwanis Club activities at the Ventura Youth Correctional Facility. Some female crew members are involved in a

Theater Arts class once a week.

Case conference is held every 60 days on Miramar Unit. The assigned counselor, CDF fire captain, the camp administrator and parole agent evaluate crew members' performance in the areas of treatment, education and employability.

On Miramar Unit, camp wards live in a hall with 25 rooms. A female camp ward can receive one mail package per month. In the package, they can receive food items, clothing, hygiene items, make-up, electronics, and school supplies. They are also able to mail-order from outside companies to buy clothing and electronics.

The female crewmembers can earn from \$6 to \$14 per week. Their pay depends on their position and status on the fire crew. With their earnings they are able to pay for their restitution and send money home to their parents and children. Some have donated money to the Victim's Fund and other fundraisers. Frequently, Miramar fire camp participants are interested in pursuing fire-fighting employment.

Prior to release, they receive letters of recommendation from their fire captain and some apply to various fire departments. Most other Miramar wards use their experience as a reference for jobs in the community.

The Miramar Camp Program is a structured program to help female offenders reintegrate into their community. While assigned to the camp program, female wards gain self-esteem. They learn to demonstrate responsible behavior and learn the importance of teamwork.

In addition, the community benefits from the thousands of man-hours of public service completed per year.

## Mt. Bullion's a Success at Raising Funds

(From page nine)

the holidays, the camp kitchen virtually overflows with pies, breads and dinner rolls to complete the holiday feast at homes throughout the county. Through the efforts of Supervising Cook

camp. Ft. Bullion was designed and constructed by Maintenance Mechanic George Shipp and YCC Jeff Baladad to enable it to be towed to the site of the event, quickly put into service, and then

towed back to camp to await the next fund-raiser. Ft. Bullion is modeled after forts of the American west. Mariposa's local history tends to draw a great deal of interest from the crowds attending the various events.

This has helped the camp generate nearly \$100,000 in support for victims programs within the county over the last nine

years.

Enough has been raised to enable the retirement of the mortgage on one shelter operated by the county's domestic violence agency, Mountain Crisis Services, and allowing the purchase of a second shelter.

Mt. Bullion staff has universally embraced the cause of Crime Victims and give generously of their time and effort. It is the rare individual at the camp who is not involved in one or more of the fund-raising or support activities.

Two camp staff, recently retired Superintendent Cindy Perkins and SYCC John Powell are recent recipients of the Director's Departmental Victim Services Award, and current Superintendent Dennis Baker and Baladad have received Departmental Certificates of Appreciation for services on behalf of crime victims.



Education is a high priority in all of the camps. When wards are not working, they are learning.

II Steve Stearns, Cook II's, Chico Ancheta and Judy Fenstermaker, and the 14 culinary program wards, the BREAD program generates more than \$1,000 a month to the Camp's Victim Fund.

Mt. Bullion has a long history of supporting victim's causes. The camp adopted the community spousal abuse shelter and its umbrella agency, the Mountain Crisis Service as a primary recipient of its support. Funds have been generated through such activities as the BREAD program, the annual Golf Tournament, Senior Citizen's Food Sale, Storytelling Festival refreshments, and "Ft. Bullion" sales at the Mariposa County Fair, Bluegrass Festival, Celtic Games, Mineral and Gem show, and the Civil War Re-enactment.

Ft. Bullion serves as the retail food sales booth for the

## S. Carraway's U. S. Navy Mentoring Program Unique to Juvenile Corrections Nationally

By **Beatrice Driver**  
Parole Agent I

The U. S. Navy Mentoring Program started in 1998 and was created through the cooperation of the United States Department of Defense, the United States Navy, the California Youth Authority (CYA) and the Youthful Offender Parole Board. Through this program, S. Carraway Public Service and Fire Center wards participate in Navy work training academies at the local Navy base, in order to gain specialized work skills. This training would be enormously expensive or unavailable for CYA wards to receive in the community.

Ward participants in the Navy Mentoring Program work side-by-side with regular U.S. Navy trainees. The wards that have attended the program have excelled in the areas of leadership and academics--several of

them ranking first in class ahead of Navy regulars.

Because of the enormous success of the program, the Department of Defense has expanded the program to the state of Florida. They are currently exploring options to continue expansion in other states.

To date, three wards have graduated from the Underwater Welding Program, 11 wards from the 16-Week Automotive Training Program, and one ward from the one-week Basic Rescue Training Program. S. Carraway Camp anticipates expanding the U.S. Navy Mentoring Program by adding a 6-Week Tool & Equipment Training Program.

U. S. Navy personnel have been impressed by the wards that have gone through the program and have encouraged them to consider joining the military when they are honorably discharged from parole.



# Nevada Union Education Connection — A Unique Partnership

By **Mike Barkhurst**, Ed.D.  
CORE Teacher/Counselor

Ten years ago two institutions formed a unique partnership. Washington Ridge Youth Conservation Camp and the Nevada Joint Union High School



*A camp ward's schedule is dawn-to-dusk with work. And when dusk comes...they continue to work in classrooms.*

District of Grass Valley joined forces to determine if a public high school could help wards assigned to the Youth Authority system continue their high school education and earn diplomas.

After all of these years working together, both institutions have seen major accomplishments in the instruction of wards that have previously had no success in the public school system. Over the last ten years, 274 wards have successfully completed all requirements for graduation and received their high school diplomas.

Adding to the uniqueness of

School are mandatory for wards that have not received high school diplomas. Classes start at 6 p.m. and end at 11 p.m., providing the students with ten class choices, including physical education.

The CORE program includes all required academics, in addition to special education, reading, GED preparation, woodshop, arts, computers, careers, and ceramics. Wards are required to complete the same course requirements as high school students in the district — 240 credits earn a high school diploma.

Washington Ridge's Empire High School moves further from the institutional high school environment through its athletic programs. Washington Ridge and the Nevada Union High School District are sharing the costs of preparing a multi-purpose athletic field on the conservation camp grounds. When completed, the field will accommodate baseball, softball, and soccer. Other high schools, colleges and local community athletic groups will be invited to

will provide a networked PC lab consisting of 30 computers and a server. A very successful software program titled "Skills Bank 4" will be installed on all computers, and will provide basic skill practice in reading, writing,

entire course before participating in other offerings provided by the high school.

The major goal of the new program is to provide up-to-date computer and basic skill practice for all students.

As Nevada Joint Union High School District and Washington Ridge complete ten years of this collaborative effort to provide a high school education for non-high school graduates, they can share many successes.

Washington Ridge's Empire High School plans to continue maintaining

and developing this successful partnership for years to come.



*Physical Education Teacher Jeff Bickmore put Washington Ridge Camp wards through their basketball drills.*

language, basic math, intermediate math and information.

All wards will be required to take pre and post-tests in each discipline, and must complete the



*Everyone works at camp. Since Superintendent Steve Gardner returned to Washington Ridge Camp and brought Pepper with him, there has been a significant drop in varmint problems.*



*It isn't always hard work and hard study for the wards in camps. Here, a Washington Ridge Camp ward finds painting a calming influence.*

the partnership, graduation ceremonies are held at a local high school, not at the camp. The students graduating from Empire High School, which is the name of the high school at Washington Ridge, go through all of the pomp and ceremony of a community graduation. Families and friends see the graduates in a high school, rather than an institutional setting. Each graduation is followed with a reception, encouraging interactions between graduates and their families.

Classes at Empire High

compete against Washington Ridge teams. Already, a camp basketball team competes annually in the local city league. Jeff Bickmore, a district high school physical education teacher, credentialed basketball coach, and a former professional basketball player in Australia, coaches the team.

The high school district also provides a complete Macintosh computer lab as an education resource for the students. Next year, in addition to the existing technology, the school district

## Washington Ridge Crime on Victims Course Integral to Camp Success

By **Dean Haumschilt**  
Parole Agent I

An important part of ward programs at Washington Ridge Youth Conservation Camp is the Impact of Crime on Victims course. Youth Correctional Counselor Cindy Morgan is the course coordinator, and has been an integral part of the program's evolution since it started in 1988. Morgan has adopted the standard

curriculum to emphasize personal accountability.

The students who attend the classes are those that need to fulfill Youthful Offender Parole Board (YOPB) requirements. They not only learn the academic aspects of crime victim awareness, but are also held responsible for demonstrating an application of that knowledge to their own victims' situation through group discussions, individual counseling, role-play and interviews. More than 600 students have gone through the since 1988.

Through the years she has also served as a faculty member on the "Promising Practices and Strategies for Victim Services in Corrections Conference" series, sponsored by the National Center for Victims of Crime. In this capacity, she has trained professionals in the states of Maine, Nebraska, New Hampshire and Florida.



*YCC Cindy Morgan listens to a guest speaker at her victim awareness class.*



# Ben Lomond Community Activities

(From page six)

resource management services to the state through the Department of Forestry.

Television coverage of wildfires, earthquakes, and floods has brought the reality of these disasters into homes of many Californians. However, few viewers know that the firefighters and workers dressed in orange safety clothing are wards or inmates of the California Youth Authority as well as California Department of Corrections.

Conservation camps are providing the bulk of the workforce of trained crews that control these wildland fires and other emergencies.

Ben Lomond ward crews were on the front lines both in the long fire season of 1996 and the many flood disasters in the winter of 1996 – 1997. They again manned the levees and flood control efforts in 1998, due to El Nino.

As these wards repay their debt to society, they provide an economic benefit to the state and local communities by performing many hours of work for community service projects as well as fire protection activities. During fire fighting or other emergencies assigned, wards earn a dollar a day. Some wards with special skills or responsibilities earned up to \$2.50 per day. Because of the minimal wages paid, the state saves millions of dollars that otherwise would be paid to accomplish these varied task.

The California Cadet Corps military training and drill program at Ben Lomond Camp was initiated in 1978, with the support of then Governor Jerry Brown and CYA Director Pearl West. It is still operates today as part of every wards program. The stress of military appear-



The annual Santa Cruz playhouse project is one of the favorite ward activities, and it raises thousands of dollars every year for the Boys and Girls Club.

ance, drill, and regular self-discipline has blended well with the rigors and demands of fire fighting, and needed preparation for entering the general workforce upon parole release.

In addition to the work and military programs operating daily at Ben Lomond Camp, we offer many other programs and activities. Each evening the camp provides remedial and high school education classes, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, victim awareness programs, young men as fathers programs, and general guidance counseling. It also, provides recreational activities and hobby craft activities.

During non-work hours, the wards volunteer for other special projects. One of the projects is the Ben Lomond Camp Boys & Girls Club of Santa Cruz Playhouse. For the past 6 years, the wards and staff have combined their efforts with local building contractors to construct a playhouse for the Ben Lomond Camp Boys & Girls Club of Santa Cruz. This event is an annual fundraiser entitled the "Playhouse Auction." One year, this project raised over \$40,000 in funds to operate programs targeted to serve the at-risk youth in the local area.

# Camps Special Edition Was a Team Effort

The first call for articles and pictures for this edition went out early in January 2001. What was to be a simple summer edition, turned into an ambitious project. This was due to the "great" materials send in by the camps and pre-camps.

We didn't want a plain publication. We asked for and received, what makes each camp unique in our system. We found that the camps are unique, not only in geography, but in the services they provide the wards and the surrounding communities.

We wanted to take this opportunity to say "thank you" to all of the camp superintendents and their staff for taking the time, and making the effort, to deliver

their stories and pictures. It is their work that makes this publication stand out. In telling their unique stories, they made this publication unique in its own history.

What makes us appreciate their efforts more, is that this was done during a very, very busy fire season in Northern California.

While we may have felt intrusive at times wanting more information, or another special picture, we were provided what we needed cheerfully, and in a timely manner. Not all of the articles made the publication. We expanded it from eight pages to 12, and unfortunately, still could not use it all. We thank you for making this a great issue.

# Los Robles Fire Camp's Programs

(From page seven)

weight lifting competitions, football games and other such team activities. Los Robles has even had a rugby team that was state ranked and took first place in a statewide division. Team sports not only encourage strength and stamina, but also help build a strong "team mentality" that is necessary for protection and safety when battling fires in sometimes dangerous situations.

Los Robles Fire Crew 3 is designated as the training crew. It consists of eight trainers who assist the California Department of Forestry (CDF) fire captain train up to eight trainees by sharing their experiences and assisting the trainees with their exercises.

After three weeks of intensive training, if the wards are able to demonstrate that they are capable of the physical conditioning, the mental understanding and safety precautions necessary, they are placed on a regular crew.

During fire season, the wards are very busy. Not only do they get dispatched to local and out-of-county fires, they also assist at the air attack base--loading and fueling the air tankers and getting them back in the air as quickly.

Things don't slow down in the off-season. The crews are involved with community service projects and training such as the scuba team, also unique to Los Robles. The team trains during the off-season and helps out with the Harbor festival in Morro Bay as well as, the Wildflower Festival at San Antonio Lake. This is the only crew trained and certified in water search and rescue in the CYA.

The WARR (Wild Animal Rescue and Rehabilitation) Program tends to sick and injured birds of prey that are brought in for the program. The program is guided with outside licensed volunteers and veterinarians. The birds are given first aid and nursed back to health in an avi-

ary and released back into the wild as soon as possible.

Wards in the Peer Group travel to many local schools and talk to at-risk teens about gangs and criminal behavior, to warn the students not to make the same mistakes in life that they have made.

In the evening, many programs are offered to the wards by camp counselors to help them get ready for parole, such as the drug program, victims group,



Injured predatory birds find a safe haven in Los Robles Fire Camp's WARR.

gang awareness, parenting class and anger management.

Los Robles Fire Camp is not only a very active camp, but one that puts an emphasis on making a difference in the lives of the wards and improving the community. This is accomplished by developing programs that provide wards with new challenges to their physical endurance and mental growth.

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(916) 262-1467

### Communications Office

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### TDD

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(800) 735-2922

### Safety Hotline

(800) 500-3730



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Official Youth Authority Newsletter

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